

What Are Illegal Pesticides?

You may see people selling them on the street or in small neighborhood stores. They are called “**Tres Pasitos**” or “**Insecticide Chalk**” and they come with a guarantee to kill roaches, mice and other household pests like nothing else on the market.

And in a way, they're right. That's because illegal pesticides are often much more toxic than “registered” pesticides – those pesticides that EPA has approved, after strict testing, for use in your home. What this means is that illegal pesticides can poison more than roaches. They can harm you and your family, especially children.



Where to Go for Help

Please call the **National Pesticide Information Center** at **1-800-858-PEST**.

Pesticide experts will help you in English or Spanish.

Or, if you live in New York State, New Jersey, Puerto Rico or the U.S. Virgin Islands, you may contact EPA's regional pesticides office at **732-321-6769**.

More information on illegal pesticides can be found on EPA's website at www.epa.gov/pesticides/health/illegalproducts



Tres Pasitos, Insecticide Chalk & Other Illegal Pesticides:
Sure they kill bugs ... 
They can also poison people.

Protect Your Family

KNOW THE DANGERS OF ILLEGAL PESTICIDES



U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Why Some Pesticides are Illegal

When EPA approves a pesticide, it gives the product an EPA Registration ID number. If you look at a can of common roach spray sold in a supermarket, you will see an EPA ID number, a list of the chemicals in the product and instructions for how to use it. EPA requires this information on the label to protect you. It is your right to know what you are applying in your home. But illegal pesticides have not been reviewed by EPA. They are often imported to the U.S. illegally, and contain chemicals that are often much too toxic to be used in your home. A package of Tres Pasitos, for example, has no instructions on it. There is nothing on the package to warn you that it is one of the most dangerous

pesticides we know of, and that if a child eats some, he or she can die!



Products to Watch Out For

Tres Pasitos means “three little steps” in Spanish, because it is all mice and rats can muster before they die. It is often sold in little plastic bags, and looks like crushed black pepper. It is extremely dangerous. Children who crawl or play on the floor are especially at risk when it is sprinkled around the home to control mice and rats. Breathing or eating large amounts of Tres Pasitos can cause weakness, blurred vision, headache, nausea, tearing, sweating and tremors in people. Very high doses can kill, because it paralyzes breathing. This makes sense, because this is exactly what it does to mice and rats.

Insecticide Chalk is also known as “**Miraculous Chalk**” or “**Chinese Chalk**.” It is sold in small stores or on the street for about \$1 a box. It is mostly imported illegally from China and often bears a label in both English and Chinese. Sometimes the labels say “harmless to human beings”

and “safe to use.” These claims are false and dangerous. Because insecticide chalk looks just like regular chalk, children often play with it, write with it and put it in their mouths. The chemical in the chalk that kills bugs is one of the most toxic pesticides of its kind.

Tempo. Sometimes, people illegally sell products that EPA has approved, but only for use outside the home. Tempo is one of them. It is approved by EPA for use outdoors, at places like golf courses. But it must not be used by people in their homes, because without sunlight and rain, it does not break down and become less toxic as it is supposed to.

How Do I Know if a Product is Illegal?

Look for an EPA Registration ID number on the label. If none appears, the product is probably illegal. No label at all is also a sure sign that it is illegal. Look at the packaging. Is it broken, old or unprofessional? Does the product make claims on the label that seem suspicious? Think about where you are buying the product. If it's sold on the street, it could be illegal. If you have any questions, please contact the National Pesticide Information Center *toll-free* at 1-800-858-PEST.

How Do I Get Rid of Illegal Pesticides?

Wear rubber gloves to wrap them tightly in newspaper and throw them in the trash. If you have sprinkled the pesticide around your house or used chalk to draw lines on your floors, wear rubber gloves and use a wet sponge to wipe it up. Then throw away any of the pesticide. Be sure to throw away the sponge you used.

